

MIGRANT

Spring 2018 Issue 32

MAGAZINE



Kentucky Migrant Education Program

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Contacts:

Neil Watts

Branch Manager

502-564-3791 Ext. 4054

neil.watts@education.ky.gov

Jessica Sanderson

Migrant Education
Program Consultant

502-564-3791 Ext. 4004

jessica.sanderson@education.ky.gov

Christina Benassi

State Migrant

Education Director

502-564-3791 Ext. 4025

Christina.benassi@education.ky.gov



A year in review 2017

By Christina Benassi

There were many great things to celebrate in 2017. It was a wonderful year and hopefully 2018 will be even better. In 2017 Christina Benassi became the new migrant state director after Heather Rhorer began a new position with Title II. We have also welcomed a few new staff members at the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Tara Rodriguez is the new director of the Division of Continuous Improvement. Rodriguez was previously the manager of the Audits Branch and a chemistry teacher at Western Hills High School. Also, Jessica Sanderson is the new migrant consultant. Sanderson came to KDE from Owen County Elementary where she taught 1st grade.

In the past year, the Kentucky Migrant Education Program (KYMEP) has undergone several changes due to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which went into effect on July 1, 2017. The changes include the certificate of eligibility (COE) and the basic interview pattern (BIP). Also, there were several changes in eligibility. The changes have allowed more migrant students to qualify for our program because of new ways to add comments and information to tell the migrant story.

The electronic certificate of eligibility (E-COE) has been implemented statewide. This has been such an accomplishment and it is very exciting that everyone is now using their devices in the field. The electronic version has made approving COE's much easier.

The KYMEP is proud of our staff for their cooperation and willingness during the transition to ESSA and our electronic E-COE's.

This year's Fall Academy was one of the best the program has held. Everyone had an outstanding time and we received wonderful feedback. Of course, everyone learned a lot about ESSA and the new COE. Everyone enjoyed the "Pie in the Face" contest and we even raised money for the scholarship fund.

Kentucky has a lot to be proud of. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to the Kentucky Migrant Education Program.

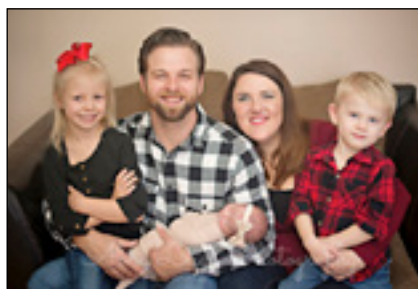
Welcome Jessica Sanderson as the Kentucky Migrant Education Program consultant

By Christina Benassi

Please welcome Jessica Sanderson as the new migrant consultant at the Kentucky Department of Education. Sanderson is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) where she received a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in special education. During her time at EKU, she was a member of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority where she held various executive and vice president positions.

Sanderson came to KDE with more than six years of experience in early childhood education and is a former 1st -grade teacher at Owen County Elementary. She lives in Frankfort with her husband and three children, including new baby, Kayleigh.

Sanderson is happy to be working with the Kentucky Migrant Education Program and is excited to get to know each and every person who works within the program.



Fall Academy 2017 Award Winners

Exceptional Summer Staff

In recognition of remarkable initiative and passion, the 2017 Exceptional Summer Staff Award was presented to **Danielle Hachey** from the Northern Kentucky Regional Service Center.

Advocate of the Year

The Advocate of the Year Award was presented to **Teresa Dotson** from Powell County for her humble devotion and service. Dotson started with the migrant program in 2011

Recruiter of the Year

The Recruiter of the Year Award was presented to **Elma Simpson** from Marion County for her remarkable perseverance and excellence.

Rookie of the Year

The 2017 Rookie of the Year Award was presented to **Corina Hill**, of Hardin County, who has been described as a pleasure to work with because of her extraordinary enthusiasm and effort. Hill joined the migrant family in the fall of 2016. Since that time she has made a

tremendous impact on families.

Regional/LEA Administrator

The award for Regional/LEA Administrator of the Year was presented to **April Harper**, director of the Central Kentucky Regional Service Center, for her outstanding leadership and service.

Regional/District Support Staff

The award for Regional/District Support Staff was presented to **Milton Meza** of the Northern Kentucky Regional Service Center for his exceptional service and dedication. Meza has served as a records clerk for two years.

Veteran of the Year

The Veteran of the Year Award was presented to **Laura Puente**

from the Eastern Kentucky Regional Service Center for her exceptional dedication and experience. Puente has been with the MEP for about 13 years.



From left to right, April Harper, Milton Meza, Laura Puente, Corina Hill and Danielle Hachey.

Thankful for their dedication and service

By Michael E. Hay

As happens in many school districts, the Kentucky Migrant Education Program (KYMEP) has seen its share of retirements and personnel changes. As the 2017-18 school year began we learned that two longtime champions for Kentucky's migrant children would not be returning to KYMEP. Katalin McChesney, migrant advocate and recruiter for the Danville and Boyle County district MEP consortium, and Mary Adrienne Davis, district contact for Garrard County Schools MEP, took on other roles at their districts.

McChesney served as an advocate and recruiter for the program for 15 years during which she experienced many changes to the program and the populations we serve. She was moved to a fulltime English Language Learner position at Danville Independent Schools. In an email to colleagues before she left, McChesney wrote:

"I have truly enjoyed working with you the past 15 years and treasure the memories and friendships we have formed through the years. I am really grateful to have been part of a program that puts students and families first."

We are thankful for her service. McChesney was a great advocate for our migrant children and their families. Her direct – and indirect – impact will be her legacy. Best wishes to her.

Mary Adrienne Davis continues to have an indirect impact on the Garrard County MEP although she left her role as the district contact this past fall. Davis has worked with the MEP since 2009. She was a classroom teacher, principal and

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2017 Fall Academy



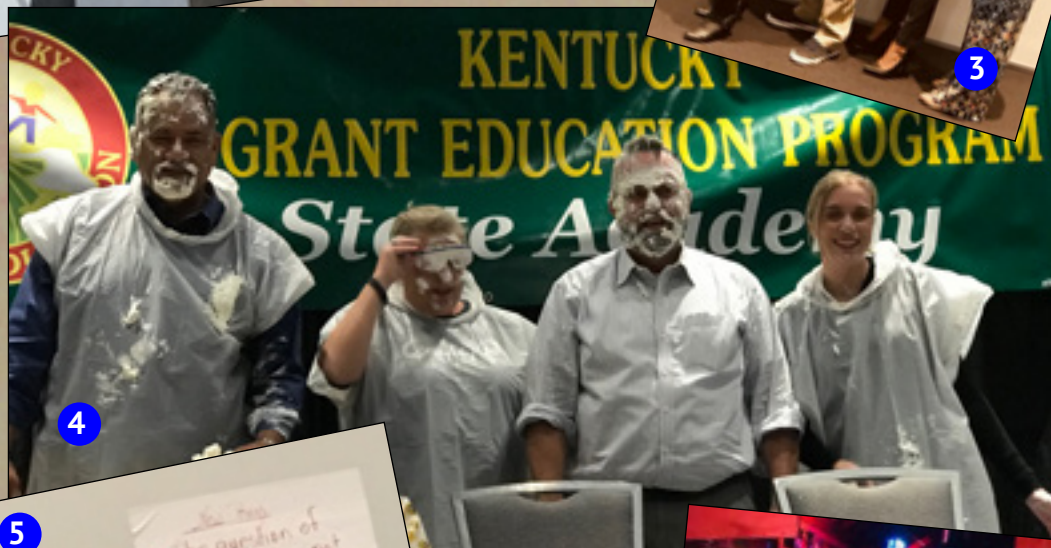
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Laura Bohorquez



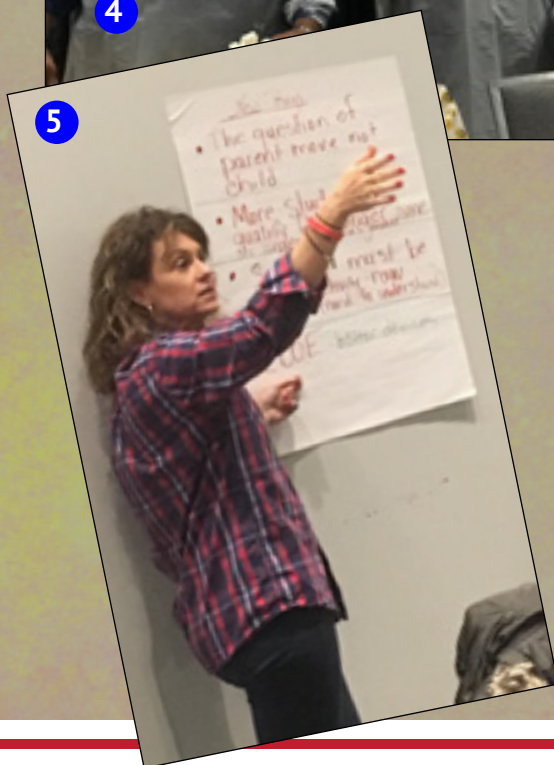
2
Laura Puente and Pavel Romero



3
Left to right: Elena Davis, Pavel Romero, Mary Steward and Laura Puente



4
Left to right: Ray Melecio, April Harper, Michael Hay and Christina Benassi



5
Debbi Rose



6
left to right: Elena Davis, Laura Puente, Lupi Ginn, Courtney Lawson and Pavel Romero

district administrator and has been responsible for almost every districtwide program at one time or another.

Wearing multiple administrative hats was very beneficial to the migrant staff and the children they served. Davis was always innovative in her approach to meeting the needs of the migrant kids. Whether it was collaborating with other programs in the district or partnering with community, faith-based and civic groups, Garrard County's migrant children and families were always at the core of the benefits offered. Davis always worked with the regional office to

bounce around new ideas for staff scheduling and summer program options so that migrant funds could be stretched to offer services in the most efficient and effective way.

Because of the timing of their exit, the KYMEP was unable to honor these dedicated educators for their time and service working with staff, children, families and countless programs associated with the KYMEP. We would like to say thank you to McChesney and Davis. We wish them continued success and we know that they will continue to make an impact on the lives of students and families.

Kentucky migrant education scholarship funds

By Michael E. Hay

Thanks to all of our loyal Kentucky Migrant Education Program staff, colleagues, vendor partners and even folks from the local community who helped make the 2017 Russell D. Weatherwax Migrant Education Program Scholarship Auction a great success. The funds raised from this auction benefit migrant youth who have been enrolled in our program and then choose some type of postsecondary study, whether it be a two- or four-year college or university, vocational program or trade school. The funds raised in 2017-18 will benefit students for the 2018-19 academic year. To apply, students must be high school seniors, have taken the ACT and have been accepted to a postsecondary program or institution.

There are two scholarship funds:

- **Kentucky Migrant Scholarship – Foundation for the Tri-State Community** – This is a \$1,000 scholarship with the disbursement is \$500 for fall term; \$500 for spring term. The check comes from the Foundation for the Tri-State once the student has been verified as enrolled and attending a postsecondary educational opportunity.
- **Kentucky Migrant Program Association** – The number and amount of the awards depend upon the total amount money in the account each spring and is determined by the scholarship review committee. The minimum scholarship is \$250. We try to expend as many funds as possible to help the most students who meet the criteria.

The auction was a great success this year along with our new "Pie in the Face" event which was held at the Fall Academy in Owensboro. For the auction, we raised \$1,244. The "Pie in the Face" event raised \$147.25. Staff and other supporters gave a donation totaling \$450. We are also very fortunate to have vendors who believe in the work we do and support our students. Backpack Gear and Vicki Finan with Usborne Books gave donations totaling \$215. The grand total for the Fall Academy was \$2,056.25. Our students will greatly benefit, thank you to everyone.

We are halfway through the academic year but I wanted to recognize, the scholarship recipients for the 2017-18 school year. Each applicant was screened to meet the minimum qualifications and then their applications were scored and ranked by a panel of judges (none are migrant staff). Congratulations to each of these students.

KY Migrant Program Association Scholarship Fund		
Applicant	District	Award Amount
Joseph Espinoza	Madison County	\$1,250
Judith Ozuna	Marion County	\$1,000
Jose Rogelio Delgado	Robertson County	\$750
Juan Carlos Gijon Santiago	Marion County	\$500
KY Migrant Scholarship Fund Foundation for the Tri-State Community		
Applicant	District	Award Amount
Joseph Espinoza	Madison County	\$1,000
Total Distribution \$4,500		

Success story of Maria Villasana

By Madeline Potter

Maria Villasana first moved from Mier y Noriega, Nuevo Leon, Mexico to Houston, Texas when she was 11 years old. Because of her family's frequent moves, Villasana did not attend school in Texas even though her family lived in the state for a few months. When she was 12 years old, her family moved from Houston her family moved to Tifton, Ga. where she started in the Migrant Education Program (MEP).

Villasana said the MEP in Tifton was outstanding. She has fond memories of program staff and says that they were the only people who ever offered her true help. Her migrant teacher would take the students into her RV/ traveling camper to hold English lessons and assist with homework. The program also took Villasana on many educational field trips and gave her many of her first experiences, including visits to the zoo, swimming and going to the movie theater. Villasana vividly remembers seeing the movie "Free Willy." The program opened up new worlds for her and gave her experiences she had never known.

Villasana's family started moving annually to Winchester or Mt. Sterling, Ky. then back to Tifton. Villasana remembers starting to work in the fields with her parents when she was 12. After school, on weekends and on all school holidays, Villasana and her siblings would be out in the fields working hard alongside the adults.

In Kentucky, Villasana and her siblings learned everything there is to know about working in tobacco. They set, transplanted, weeded, topped, cut, housed and stripped tobacco. In Georgia, she worked in jalapeños and tomatoes.

Villasana remembers learning the same things over and over again in school. Due to her family's migratory lifestyle, each new school would start her on the basics. Villasana believes that her migrant teacher was the

only person to help her to advance in her academic knowledge.

When Villasana was in 10th grade she became pregnant and dropped out of school. She was not in school for several years and was not even a conversational English speaker.

Five years ago, when her father was diagnosed with cancer, Villasana was forced to learn how to navigate the healthcare and hospice systems. Through these experiences and realizing the strength she had to overcome these obstacles, Villasana was empowered to continue her schooling.

Villasana, now a mother of five, enrolled in an adult education program where she received her GED in just two months. While she was taking her GED classes her English improved significantly, she even took her GED test in English. Motivated to continue, Villasana went on to pursue a bachelor's degree in social work at Morehead State University. This year Villasana was awarded the 2017 Richard Reser Scholarship for Minority Scholars for her outstanding achievements. Villasana had such a high GPA that she won the scholarship over all other students. Villasana received a medal, certificate and \$500 scholarship.

Villasana completed her practicum coursework with the Clark County and Montgomery County Migrant Education programs. Though it was an untraditional choice, she wanted to work with people who help migrant students. Villasana has been a great joy to work with and has motivated us even more to encourage our students to follow their dreams.

We are proud to say that Villasana graduated in December 2017 with a bachelor's degree in social work with a 3.3 GPA. Villasana would like to pursue a career with the MEP or a hospice program.

Villasana attributes her self-motivation to the confidence that her Migrant Program experiences inspired in her.



Maria Villasana

Important Dates:

Applications for the 2018-19 Tri-State Foundation - KY Migrant Scholarship Application must be post marked by March 30.

Kentucky Migrant Education Program Grant Applications are due by March 15 to Regional Coordinators.

NASDME 2018 National Migrant Education Conference is April 29 - May 2.